



Foster Parent Connections - September 18, 2024

Missouri Department of Social Services sent this bulletin at 09/18/2024 09:36 AM CDT

Having trouble viewing this email? [View it as a Web page.](#)



September 18, 2024

Vol 4, Issue 9

- [Announcements](#)
- [The Call to Foster Podcast](#)
- [Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition Trainings](#)
- [Mental Health America Conference](#)
- [Podcast Learning Opportunities](#)
- [Tips & Reminders](#)

Announcements



Show Me Healthy Kids (SMHK) Educational Assistance

Show Me Healthy Kids (SMHK)- Educational Assistance

With the start of the new school year, children in foster care face extra challenges with their education. They often have more problems with health and social skills compared to others their age. Before entering foster care, many of these children are already behind in school. In homes where children experience abuse or neglect, education often takes a backseat to more immediate needs such as safety, housing, and food. These basic needs are prioritized, overshadowing educational concerns. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, the high school graduation rate for youth in foster care in Missouri is 69%, much lower than Missouri's average of 89.5%.

When kids enter foster care, the SMHK team works with everyone involved to help with their needs. They connect members to resources that meet their needs, including physical and behavioral health as well as educational support. Each time a child moves to a new home and school district, it's like starting over. This can hurt their grades and end important relationships with teachers and friends.

To support our members with educational needs, SMHK has introduced an additional tutoring benefit* for youth who are at risk of failing core subjects. SMHK has teamed up with Club Z, to offer up to 20 tutoring sessions per year per member. Depending on where they live, these sessions can be in person or virtually.

In addition to tutoring, SMHK also has an additional HiSET (High School Equivalency Test) benefit*. Youth can use the tutoring benefit to prepare for the HiSET. The HiSET is a five-part test Missouri uses to issue high school equivalency credential, comparable to a traditional high school diploma. This credential allows members to advance their career, join the military, or continue their education. SMHK can provide a voucher to cover the cost of the test once a year.

For more information or to use these benefits, contact SMHK at 1-877-236-1020, ext. 6075125 (TTY/TDD 711) or email HSN_Anchors@homestatehealth.com

*Members must meet benefit criteria



What is Missouri SuN Bucks?

Great news! The Missouri Department of Social Services has received approval for the Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer Program, known as “Missouri SuN Bucks.”

This new program will help families buy food for their school-aged children during the summer months when school is not in session. Foster children ages 7 through 17 are automatically eligible for this benefit – **there is no need to apply**. Children in foster care will get a one-time \$120 benefit that can be used to buy nutritious foods at authorized locations.

For more information and FAQs regarding this benefit program, visit the [Missouri SuN Bucks webpage](#).

The Call to Foster Podcast



The Call to Foster Podcast: S2E9

"Safe Haven Baby Boxes"

Listen in on a conversation with the Founder and current CEO of [Safe Haven Baby Boxes](#), Monica Kelsey. Safe Haven Baby Boxes' (SHBB) mission is to prevent the illegal abandonment of newborns through education, raising awareness of the safe haven law, and offering the only anonymous option, the Baby Box. Monica talks about how the organization got started, where the idea came from, and the impact of the boxes across the United States. Currently, Missouri has one box in Mehlville, MO, and several other Missouri communities trying to raise the appropriate funding to acquire a box.

A former foster parent herself, Monica encourages anyone considering foster care or adoption to take the leap and "Just do it!"

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a foster parent, learn how to get started on our website: <https://dss.mo.gov/cd/foster-care/becoming-a-foster-parent.htm>

Please subscribe to and share this podcast with anyone you know who might be considering fostering! You can listen to the podcast on most popular podcast platforms.

Trainings & Events



Foster and Adoptive Care Coalition Trainings

Attachment

Tuesday, September 17 | 6:00 - 8:00 pm | 2 hour training credit | Virtual

This training helps participants understand the importance of attachment in parenting both for the children and parents who are fostering or adopting. It covers the impact of fractured attachments/lack of attachments on children's ability to attach and identifies strategies to develop healthy attachment bonds. This theme also covers developing trust and developing children's sense of connectedness and belonging. How to be attuned to children and recognizing and honoring children's primary attachment to their families is also highlighted.

[Register](#)

Separation Loss and Grief

Tuesday, September 24 | 6:00 - 8:00 pm | 2 hour training credit | Virtual

This training helps participants understand the impact of separation and ambiguous loss and the different ways children grieve. Life-long grieving and the importance of providing opportunities for grieving are explored. Strategies to help children deal with grief and loss are identified. Participants will understand loss and fractured attachments with birth family members and previous placements; recognize the importance of establishing and maintaining essential relationships with and for children; understand the impact of frequent moves and the importance of managing transitions for children; and understand the separation, grief, and loss experienced by all members of the foster/adoption network.

[Register](#)

Kinship Caregiving: Building Parental Resilience

Saturday, September 28 | 9:00 - 11:30 am | 2.5 hours training credit | Virtual

This training describes parental resilience, why resilience is important, and covers how caring for children who have experienced trauma, separation, or loss can impact a caregiver's own well-being. This theme also covers the behaviors that foster a protective environment for parents and children. This training helps participants understand the importance of self-care and practical ideas for how to do it. Participants will understand signs of stress and burnout and recognize the importance of maintaining their mental, physical, emotional and spiritual well-being.

[Register](#)

Mental Health America Conference

Thursday - Saturday, September 19- 21 | Virtual

Mental Health America will be presenting their 2024 Conference on September 19-21. There will be tons of breakout sessions. You will also be able to view them for up to 30 days after the conference. The virtual option is a pay as you can.

[Register](#)



Podcast Learning Opportunities

The Call to Foster

The Missouri Department of Social Services is proud to present *The Call to Foster*, a heartwarming new podcast series that features inspiring stories from foster parents across the state. Each episode will highlight their unique experiences and perspectives, how they overcame hesitations, and provide helpful advice for anyone considering becoming a foster parent. Prepare your heart as you hear first-hand from the compassionate families and individuals working together to make a difference for Missouri's most vulnerable children.

Mental Health Matters Podcast

Mental Health Matters podcast series explores the stories behind influencers and innovators in mental health research and takes you into the lives of people living with mental illnesses.

Children's Home Society of MI/Lutheran Social Service of MI Free Webinars

Children's Home Society of MI/Lutheran Social Service of MI offers a bunch of free webinars. They will teach you about adopting and parenting children with identified needs, cover different parenting strategies, discuss adoptee perspectives, and/or address different concerns surrounding culture and adoption. These webinars should be useful for prospective adoptive/foster families and adoptive/foster families.

[Learn More](#)

Adoption and Foster Care Events and Training

Looking for training opportunities? Interested in adoption? Know someone who is interested in becoming a foster parent and wants to learn more? Find events online or near you on the new calendar on the [Missouri Heart Gallery website.](#)

Hosting an event? Send us an event request!

[View the Calendar](#)

The following links will take you to a multitude of training opportunities that are available for in-service hours:

[Parent Cafe Training Institute \(missouri.edu\)](#)

[Foster Parent College - Online Training for Foster, Adoptive, and Kinship Parents and Caregivers](#)

[Training | Child Welfare Information Gateway](#)

[All Courses - FosterAdopt Connect Training \(thinkific.com\)](#)

[Family Development Training - Central Missouri Foster Care and Adoption Association](#)

[Training for Parents | Foster & Adoptive Care Coalition \(foster-adopt.org\)](#)

Tips & Reminders



Children's Division Caregiver Portal

The Children's Division now has a Children's Division Caregiver Portal for foster, relative, respite, legal guardianship and adoptive families! This portal is the first phase of a multi-year project. This phase allows caregivers to see their demographics, what placements they have, and their financial information. To visit this portal please log into https://my.mo.gov/gsp?id=childrens_division_caregiver_portal.

If you have any trouble, please email FosterCare@dss.mo.gov and we will assist you.

Family Resource Centers

Did you know that there are Family Resource Centers across the state that serve Foster and Adoptive Families? Family Resource Centers (FRCs) are support systems that provide resources, training, peer support, respite, and other services families need to navigate raising children through foster care, adoption, and guardianship. These centers are regional, and you

can inquire about services, resources, and how to get started in foster care or adoption through the resource center that services your area via phone, email, and the center's website.

[Find a Family Resource Center Near You](#)

Turn In Your Monthly Medical Log and Travel Log

This is a reminder to complete/turn in your Monthly Medical Log and Travel Log to the case manager(s) when you see them every month. You need to complete a Medical Log (CD-265) for every child every month even if they had no medical appointments and/or do not take medication. This form is required to document consent decisions for routine medical care and provide a medical history for the youth each month. If they are in your home only part of the time, please fill one out for the time the child was there. Your cooperation with this is greatly appreciated. The medical and travel log are now available on the I am a Foster Parent web page. [Children's Division | Missouri Department of Social Services \(mo.gov\)](#)

Discipline Policy

(A) Discipline shall be used in a constructive, fair, and consistent manner. The foster parent(s) shall not subject a foster child to corporal or degrading punishment. (B) No foster child shall be subjected to verbal abuse, threats of corporal punishment, derogatory remarks about him/herself or members of his/her family, threats to withhold family visits, threats to expel the child from the foster home, or the withholding of food, shelter, or clothing. (C) No foster child shall be subjected to abuse or neglect as defined in section 210.110, RSMo. (D) One (1) child shall not be permitted to discipline another child in a foster home. (E) No foster child shall be deprived of mail or family visits as a form of discipline.

[Learn More](#)

Foster Parent Identification Cards

All Foster Parents should have a Foster Parent ID card. This is provided to you after you are licensed. If you do not have an ID card please email FosterCare@dss.mo.gov and we will get you the application.

We want to hear from you! If there is information you would like covered in the next Foster Parent Connections Newsletters email, Melissa.J.Selsor@dss.mo.gov.



Our Mission: Empower Missourians to live safe, healthy, and productive lives.

Update or stop subscriptions at any time on your **Subscriber Preferences Page**. You will need to use your email address to log in. If you have questions or problems with the subscription service, please visit subscriberhelp.govdelivery.com.

Note: Replies to this email address will not be monitored.

This newsletter is provided to you by the [Missouri Department of Social Services](#)

Subscribe to updates from Missouri Department of Social Services

Email Address e.g. name@example.com

Share Bulletin



Powered by



[Privacy Policy](#) | [Cookie Statement](#) | [Help](#)